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Bikes Thumpers **Check your F650GS or Dakar Forks**

Welcome, WayneC1.

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09-29-2009, 06:51 AM

#151

 ThorH

BMW F650GS



Joined: Nov 2005

Location: Oslo, Norway

Odometer: 168

Update

NHTSA Action Number: PE09026

The above case was closed on September 18 2009,

A

Make / Models : Model/Build Years:

BMW / BMW MOTORCYCLE 2000

BMW / F650 GS 2003

BMW / F650GS 2001-2002

BMW / F650GS DAKAR 2001-2002

Manufacturer : BAYERISCHE MOTOREN WERKE

Component :

SUSPENSION:FRONT

Date Investigation Opened : May 18, 2009

Date Investigation Closed : September 18, 2009

Summary:

THIS PE WAS OPENED AFTER NHTSA RECEIVED 3 VOQS CONCERNING ALLEGED FRONT AXLE SEPARATIONS ON CERTAIN BMW F650 GS MODEL MOTORCYCLES SOLD FOR USE IN THE UNITED STATES (THE SUBJECT VEHICLES). COMPLAINTS INVOLVING MOTORCYCLES IN NON-US MARKETS ARE NOT COUNTED IN THIS TOTAL. AFTER GATHERING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SUBJECT, WE ARE NOW AWARE OF FOUR CONFIRMED INCIDENTS INVOLVING MODEL YEAR 2001-2003 SUBJECT VEHICLES. ALL FOUR BIKES WERE BUILT BEFORE SEPTEMBER, 2002. OF THESE, TWO INVOLVE MY 2001 BIKES AND THE OTHER TWO, MY'S 2002 AND 2003, RESPECTIVELY. THE INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN 2002, 2003, AND TWO IN 2008. IN EACH INSTANCE, THE LUG FRACTURES ARE FORCED FRACTURES RATHER THAN FATIGUE-RELATED. BETWEEN OCTOBER 1999 AND SEPTEMBER, 2002, BMW BUILT APPROXIMATELY 4,300 SUBJECT VEHICLES. AFTER SEPTEMBER 12, 2002, ALL F650GS'S WERE BUILT WITH REINFORCED LOWER FORK TUBES TO REDUCE, ACCORDING TO BMW, "THE POSSIBILITY OF ANY SIGNIFICANT FRACTURE THAT COULD OCCUR AT THE FORK LEG AXLE LUG AREA" DURING A CRASH. BMW TOOK THIS ACTION BECAUSE THE SUBJECT VEHICLES ARE DESIGNED FOR OFF-ROAD USE WHERE CRASHES (MANY MINOR) ARE COMMON AND DID NOT WANT RIDERS TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH A BROKEN FORK AS A RESULT. CURRENTLY, THERE IS NO DATA CONCLUSIVELY ESTABLISHING THAT THE SUBJECT FORK LUGS ARE SEPARATING BEFORE AN ALLEGED CRASH OCCURS. ADDITIONALLY, THE INFREQUENT, SPORADIC, AND RANDOM NATURE OF THE FAILURES FAILS TO ESTABLISH A DEFECT TREND CURRENTLY EXISTS. THEREFORE THIS INVESTIGATION IS CLOSED. A SAFETY-RELATED DEFECT HAS NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED AT THIS TIME AND FURTHER USE OF AGENCY RESOURCES DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE WARRANTED. ACCORDINGLY, THIS INVESTIGATION IS CLOSED. THE CLOSING OF THIS INVESTIGATION DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A FINDING BY NHTSA THAT A SAFETY-RELATED DEFECT DOES NOT EXIST. THE AGENCY WILL TAKE FURTHER ACTION IF WARRANTED BY THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

 REPORT

09-29-2009, 12:50 PM

#152

 WayneC1

Gnarly Adventurer

Joined: Oct 2008

I delayed posting on the ending of the NHTSA investigation while we considered the announcement & sought further information on the background to this development which we are still doing.

Location: Sydney, Australia
Odometer: 232

What we do know however is that BMW attempted to limit the scope of the investigation to only failures which occurred on US soil & only machines owned by US citizens. This was rejected by NHTSA and all failures on US soil or associated with US citizens were listed for investigation, hence the 4 failures listed. These are PE10252808, PE10238415, PE10245369 & one other whose details are not publically disclosed.

The odd part in the sudden conclusion to the investigation is that NHTSA had arranged to meet the 2 people who suffered failures in 2008 and collect their broken forks for inspection and or testing. These appointments were abandoned at short notice with a reason given in only one case of "something has come up".

The findings are firstly that there have been "infrequent, sporadic, and random" failures in pre October 2002 F650GS forks. So the failures and the individuals involved are confirmed as real.

The failures on each machine occurred at 1400 miles, 5000 miles, 10,000 miles, 30,000 miles

The investigation (without inspecting or testing broken forks) has concluded the failures were a "forced" failure not fatigue related. ie The strength of the fork leg was exceeded

The NHTSA statement "There is no data conclusively establishing that the subject fork lugs are separating before an alleged crash occurs" fails to take into account the photo's of an oil trail on the road back to the start of the accident in 2 cases investigated and the verbal accounts from failure victims in other cases who reported an inability to steer into corners prior to crashing.

BMW has apparently stated to the investigators that the forks were redesigned to prevent axle lug detachment "during" accidents. This is a far cry from the previous BMW claims of being unaware of any failures & that the fork redesign was a "product enhancement".

The announcement does not provide any peace of mind for those of us who were hoping the investigation would provide some clarity as to the cause of the failures & hence whether fork legs should be replaced.

We will continue to seek futher information and post as information becomes available.

WayneC1 screwed with this post 09-29-2009 at 02:15 PM

! REPORT



09-29-2009, 01:37 PM

#153

HowlingMad
drags knuckles

Very well put Wayne.👍



Joined: Sep 2004
Location: Cranberry Country,
MA
Odometer: 1,125

"If you are not happy here and now, you will never be." -Taisen Deshimaru

! REPORT



10-01-2009, 01:18 AM

#154

rudolf35
Warped & Twisted Mind

What to do now?



Joined: Jun 2008
Location: Arlington, TX
Odometer: 476

Since the NHTSA has closed the investigation, for now, what is a pre Sep. 2002 owner to do; shell out \$600 US for two new sliders, sell the bike, ride on and hope, or?!?

My GS is fully farkled and one of my favorites; so the question looms over me what to do. At 19,000 miles my GS is right in the middle of the failure mileage average. On the chain gang board I posted the same question and the few that did reply stated that they will ride on and hope for the best. For right now I just have to check the legs every time I get on and see what I can come up with as far as making a farkle that will hold things together if the right leg decides to give out.

Chassis number	ZE45485
Vehicle code	0182
Series	R13
Model	F 650 GS 00 (0172 (0182))
Body type	OTHER
Catalog model	USA
Production date	2000 / 10
Engine	F 650 GS 00 (0172
Transmission	
Steering	
Catalyzer	YES



2009 XR1200
 2008 Triumph Scrambler
 2001 BMW 1150 GS
 1999 Jeep Sahara
 1986 BMW K75S
 1973 CL350 K5
 1971 BMW R60/5
[AR Trip](http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?t=460195)
[2010 AR Trip](http://www.advrider.com/forums/showt...3#post12898123)
[2010 IA Trip](http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?t=624916)

rudolf35 screwed with this post 10-01-2009 at 04:31 AM

! REPORT

10-01-2009, 04:03 AM

#155

JimR
 Gnarly Adventurer
 Joined: Jun 2009
 Location: Central Ohio
 Odometer: 328

I don't really have a dog in this fight as my F650GS is a 2006, but if I had an earlier model and liked it as well as I like the '06, I would shell out the \$600 just for the piece of mind.....and btw, if there was nothing wrong with the fork sliders to begin with, why would BMW feel the need to beef up the area that the axle mounts to the slider? I feel that when BMW made the statement to the NHTSA (see above), that that was enough for them to recall the earlier designs and replace them with the newer ones, just my .02. Regards, Jim.

Always remember: "Money talks, bullshit walks" It will never change.

! REPORT

10-01-2009, 04:22 AM

#156

GSBS
 FunHog

 Joined: Nov 2005
 Location: Blount Springs, AL

Have both GS and Dakar owners reported these failures?

Maybe I missed it in one of the previous posts, but does anyone know if any of these reported fork tube failures has occurred on the Dakar model? Or have they all been on the standard GS model? Doesn't the Dakar fork have a bit more travel?

My 03 Dakar, built sometime in 02, has the older lower tubes before the beefier casting, now has 67K miles on the clock and it has seen everything from slab to single track, although it hasn't ever hit anything head-on harder than a

Oddometer: 2,706

big pothole on the road or maybe a big rock or deep rut on a gravel road or trail.

Thanks for the info, anyone who knows.

My book's website (Now Available)

2007 950 SE-R (Tire-Eating Dragon) 🐉

2010 WR250R (Twiggy) 🐣

2003 Victory V92C + Velorex sidecar (Canine Chariot) 🐕

! REPORT



10-01-2009, 10:59 AM

#157



WayneC1

Gnarly Adventurer

Joined: Oct 2008

Location: Sydney, Australia

Oddometer: 232

Re Dakar's, the answer is yes, with the additional fork length on the Dakar it is reasonable to assume they are more likely to exceed the axle lug strength

The fork braces fitted to Dakar's are known to break without axle lug failures

PE10244404, PE10245369, & 3 other failures around the world were Dakar's

! REPORT



11-02-2009, 04:21 AM

#158



sellmeyer

Gnarly Adventurer

Joined: Mar 2007

Location: Aspen, Colorado
USA

Oddometer: 383

F650GS w/fork failure on fleabay

Have a look at item #120487439476 on flea bay.

there is a picture of the fork failure

<http://cgi.ebay.com/ebaymotors/BMW-F...orcycles#v4-36>

is this a NEW addition to the list of failures? Was this one in any of the reports?

! REPORT



11-02-2009, 09:26 AM

#159



WayneC1

Gnarly Adventurer

Joined: Oct 2008

Location: Sydney, Australia

Oddometer: 232

This is not one of the machines on the list of known failures, note the source of the machine. This demonstrates what I have said previously, which is that there will be many more fork failures buried in insurance company books as write offs

! REPORT



11-02-2009, 09:45 AM

#160



TwilightZone

Study Adventurer

Joined: Dec 2008

Location: Behind the
Redwood Curtain

Oddometer: 988

>"there is a picture of the fork failure"

Any explanation for this incident?


Did the fork fail and cause a wreck...or in this case did a wreck break the fork? Almost looks like the latter... not sure why I think that other than there doesn't appear to be enough damage to the bike for a crash induced by fork failure. (I'd expect more).

! REPORT



01-04-2010, 05:35 PM

#161

 **Eso Teric**
Gnarly Adventurer



Joined: Jun 2009
Location: N.E. VIC
Odometer: 110

Quote:

dwayne..

The forces achieved by braking are VERY minor in comparison to the forces achieved by hitting, say, a pot hole or rock, especially when you consider how rarely ABS is activated on a surface grippy enough to translate that force completely to the bike and not have it partially absorbed by the slip at the tire/road interface. Even then it is doubtful that these are the cause of the failure. Atomic bonding is also not really suspect, because aluminum alloys are pretty proven commodities (unless of course there was an error in making a particular batch, or heat). What is most suspect is a casting flaw, due to an error in the engineering calculations (unlikely because of the limited number of failures compared to units in service), a mold design problem, or even a process problem (pouring, heat treating etc.)

Very true comment, although braking introduces a very minor stress it does however become a "constant" stress in that it is always a constant and an un-measurable force and is also something a motorcyclist does very very often without even any thought, topped off with the fact that this exact force is focused at the same point on a fairly small area ALL of the time.

What I mean by that is: when I brake, be it very minor or very harsh (without including any ABS factors), the force applied to the brake on the LHS travels from the fork and down through the *steel* axle to the RHS fork, it then finds that other than the wheel itself, the excess energy has nowhere else to go but up through the RHS fork lug, it travels that way because it is 2 things, firstly: it is an aluminum structure that has been cast forged and is thus weaker than the steel axle and secondly: because the excess energy will go the path of least resistance (ie: the RHS fork lug) because it does not have any opposing force traveling towards it. That therefore means there is also a LAG issue, the RHS is now lagging behind the LHS during braking in a small but very consistent way. The BMW GS is also quite a heavy bike so paralleling to the above mentioned is the fact that the bike itself will tend to "slide" rear wheel to the left under heavy braking, this is due to the fact that the rear brake is also on the LHS.

I'm sorry but it will now become a little more complicated because of the fact that G forces will also need to come into the equation.

Under braking or acceleration any vehicle will undergo certain G force's, this means that under acceleration a vehicle will suffer extra weight in the rear area and under braking it will suffer extra forward weight, with a bike that tends to go left at the rear wheel under heavy braking, it will also end up with 1 + 0.5 + possibly more, extra weight on the LHS.

What that all means is that while the **RHS fork lug** is trying to go forwards/outward under braking, the **RHS fork leg** is trying to go downwards and depending on how much front brake is being applied, upwards because most of the forces are on LHS.

Due to the angle of the forks I seriously have doubts that hitting an object or a pot hole would only effect just the one side, also the fact that hitting a pot hole or other would have an effect both sides, or would be fairly evenly spread between the 2, I also feel that the forks themselves are placed at just the right angle that any road force like pot holes have an up and inward effect.

Saying that though, it does lend itself to the "metal fatigue" issue, if you hit a pot hole, brake, brake again, hit a pot hole, brake etc etc, what I can see here is a RHS lug going from up and inward to outward/up with a LH pull.

My small amount of time spent doing NDT (non destructive testing) involved testing aircraft crank shafts and squirting metal dye on it and putting it through a magnetic chamber so it by no means makes me an expert, I do however feel that the fact the investigative authority didn't feel the need to physically touch and see and then test the actual failed product, seems a little odd to me, I think 'dwayne' (and others) would agree, without independent/internal testing the possibility of this failure occurring again is still the subject of conjecture, more importantly what will it take/cause before it becomes a subject of serious attention?

Whether BMW themselves have a case to answer or whether it really is a manufacturing fault I think that the best outcome (and not just PR wise) is if BMW were to offer the fork replacements at cost price, even if they include a cause whereby any individual that wishes to utilise this offer must get their bike serviced at a BMW approved service outlet for the next year.

For all of us users of GS's built before the new forks it would mean peace of mind and a chance that we might purchase another BMW. Right now I am tossing up between the new 800Gs and the new 1050 Triumph tiger, at this

point in time the tiger is winning and not just because it is cheaper.

I would be interested to read the thoughts of others in this regard, especially you dwayne, i think that with your background you amongst any of us could give light to this issue and maybe even your personal thoughts on how to fix it.

Eso

Reprobate

- I don't see why I should waste my breath on accomodating idiocy

Anonymous

-Modern society is forcing the Darwinian process to become redundant

Eso Teric screwed with this post 01-05-2010 at 10:17 AM

! REPORT



01-04-2010, 07:28 PM

#162

WayneC1

Gnarly Adventurer

Joined: Oct 2008

Location: Sydney, Australia

Odometer: 232

Interesting comments and thoughts, had not looked at it from that perspective, worth further thought, Dwayne's comments would be of interest too.

Beyond our musings, NHTSA has released their concluding report into the public arena which has slipped past most people's attention, would you care to take a look at it & comment ?

<http://nhthqnwws111.odi.nhtsa.dot.gov...9026-37260.pdf>

If the link fails go to

<http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/pr...fectsearch.cfm>

Do a search on PE09026 then a document search & it brings up the list of publically available documents

As to the solution to the problem ? replace the forks, WP from a KTM are appealing & there is the YZF conversion thread here on advrider

! REPORT



01-05-2010, 02:54 AM

#163

cdnabn49

Gnarly Adventurer



Joined: Jan 2005

Odometer: 345



Kudos to WayneC1 and ESO TERIC for the insight and keeping on top of the issue at hand and their focus...

~Nemo Me Impune Lacesit~

<http://adsmc.ca/>

! REPORT



01-05-2010, 03:10 AM

#164

GSBS

FunHog



Joined: Nov 2005

Location: Blount Springs, AL

My 03 Dakar (old style casting) had fork/axle separation Saturday...

But only after the bike was rocketed some 200 feet into and thru some thick woods when I was rear-ended by an SUV:

Right side fork/axle separation after accident:

Oddometer: 2,706

Fork brace cracked at rear on left side in same accident:

The left side was still intact.

I don't think I could attribute the right side failure to a flaw in the casting, but rather to the stress of the bars and wheel twisting as it went thru trees. Don't know if it would've ever done it under "normal" situations. Bike has 72K miles on it and it hasn't been babied.

Here's where the bike ended up when we found it 10 minutes after the collision:

My book's [website](#) (Now Available)

2007 950 SE-R (Tire-Eating Dragon) 🐉

2010 WR250R (Twiggy) 🐣


2003 Victory V92C + Velorex sidecar (Canine Chariot) 🐕

! REPORT



01-05-2010, 09:49 AM

#165

 **Eso Teric**
Gnarly Adventurer



Joined: Jun 2009
Location: N.E. VIC
Oddometer: 110

<http://nhthqnwws112.odi.nhtsa.dot.gov...9026-37260.pdf>

This makes very interesting reading and i guess what they are saying makes sense. I'm sure that if you did impact something at that point of the wheel where they have indicated whilst also at full fork lock then it would cause that failure.

The thing i have an issue with is that it therefore implies that all the fork failures only occured whilst either overloaded or under very heavy braking or topping out the forks in a bump (like a pot hole) whilst **at the same time** hitting something **at that exact height**.

Was it The Red Baron who was just cruising along a fairly well maintained road when this failure occured? As far as i could tell from reading her post she didn't hit anything at all except maybe a pot hole but then for it to impact where the report is suggesting it would need to have been a very decent pot hole and i'm almost certain then that a picture of it would have been posted and the complaint would not have been to BMW it would have been to the road authority. Also one would assume that you would see that sort of hole and avoid it due to it's sheer size and the fear of doing an endo.

The way the report is written sounds almost dismissive and even a touch patronizing ...

Quote:

"If simply riding over a railway crossing, for example, would produce this failure, we would expect there to be many, many more failures since rail crossings are so common."

That was in response to a person who said that this failure had occured whilst crossing railway lines. To me personally i still see that it is very possible for the failure to occur because the person may have hit something previously under full fork lock with no visible external damage and carried on riding for days, weeks or even months until he hit the rail crossing which may have been just enough force to dislodge the lug.

That is a concern because it lends itself to the fact that a lot of forks may be out there with an internal fracture just waiting for the right (wrong) circumstances to then fail fully.

That goes back then to the previous posts (perhaps in another thread), where doing non destructive testing on the forks would be warranted, since the cost of doing that however is more than the cost of just replacing the forks it really isn't justifiable and leads back to square one, who is at fault?

Eso

Reprobate

- I don't see why I should waste my breath on accomodating idiocy


Anonymous

-Modern society is forcing the Darwinian process to become redundant

Eso Teric screwed with this post 01-05-2010 at 10:05 AM

 **REPORT**




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